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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER SKELEMANI

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ambassador Nolan paid his initial courtesy call on Botswana's Foreign Minister Phandu Skelemani on October 27. The Ambassador stressed his intention to strengthen the already warm bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Botswana. Minister Skelemani thanked the USG for our assistance, especially under the PEPFAR program. In addition, he praised the work of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in helping to foster rule of law in Africa, and asked for continued military-military cooperation. Zimbabwe was also a main topic of discussion (septel). END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Ambassador Nolan paid his initial courtesy call on Botswana's Foreign Minister Phandu Skelemani on October 27 in the Minister's office. Ambassador was accompanied by DCM and Pol/Econ Chief, while Skelemani was accompanied by his private secretary and the MFA's Deputy Director for the Americas. The Ambassador told the Minister how delighted he is to be in Botswana and explained that he hopes to travel around the country and get to know it well. He explained that American interest in Botswana is strong and growing, in part due to the success of the "No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" books and the soon-to-be released film. The Ambassador noted the many private partnerships between U.S. institutions (including Harvard, Baylor, and University of Pennsylvania) and Botswana and said he hopes to encourage and facilitate such non-governmental interactions between our two nations.

¶3. (U) Minister Skelemani thanked the USG for our continued assistance to Botswana, most notably our large contributions to HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment under the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Skelemani explained that he had personally witnessed the way that PEPFAR has changed the landscape in Botswana. The Minister said that a few years ago, his village of around 3000 people would hold 2 or 3 funerals each weekend for adults in the prime of life killed by AIDS. Now thanks to increased access to treatment, Skelemani explained, the death rate has slowed tremendously. However, Skelemani noted that the treatment success may bring a new danger, as it could allow people to "forget" about the AIDS pandemic. He pledged that education and prevention activities must continue, but thanked the Bush administration for PEPFAR, explaining that the program has had a personal and lasting impact on the people of Botswana.

¶4. (SBU) The Foreign Minister brought up the good work being done by the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Otse. He discussed at length his worry about lack of respect for rule of law in Africa, and explained that he is proud to

have law enforcement officials from other African nations not only well-trained at ILEA but exposed to Botswana and its democratic tradition. He noted that ILEA training helps to instill in the law enforcement officers that they have not only great power, but also great responsibility. Minister Skelemani also commented on the need for continued military-military contact between the United States and defense forces around Africa. Skelemani worried that many of the African region's leaders still have military or revolutionary backgrounds. He noted that one lesson soldiers take away from contact with the U.S. military or other western military forces is respect for rule of law and civilian authority.

NOLAN